



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

intellect and appetite have any common ground, even to fight on, and can *both* be relevant to action. The mystery of how reason, as well as appetite, can "move" is solved when truth is regarded as a "good" to-be-sought, and error as an "evil" to-be-avoided.

(4) We thus arrive, by a purely Aristotelian *route*, at the humanist contention that "truth" and "falsity" are fundamentally *values*. "Value" is the supreme "category," which ultimately includes all psychic process, whether "practical" or "theoretic," whether a "logical" content or a "psychological." It is merely an incidental consequence of this conclusion that the very form of the "Practical Syllogism" attests this fact, by describing truth as a something to-be-sought, while it is an easy corollary that all judgments which claim "truth" are, in a very real and important sense, "practical."

F. C. S. SCHILLER.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE,
OXFORD.

TWO COMMON FALLACIES IN THE LOGIC OF RELIGION

THERE are two fallacies that are met with so frequently in the literature of the philosophy of religion that they deserve explicit mention. The first, arising from a confusion between the value and the truth of religious beliefs, is so characteristic of the pragmatic way of thinking in the field of religion, that it may properly be labeled the pragmatic fallacy. The second fallacy arises from the attribution of the so-called religious experience to outside, "higher" forces in cases where, in reality, the cause of the experience is merely physiological—from "below" and not from "above." This may be called the fallacy of false attribution.

I

When value and truth are distinguished, and when it is seen that in many cases beliefs that are clearly false still have obvious value for those who hold them as true, then the argument so commonly used that, since certain religious beliefs possess value for the believers, they are therefore true, is seen to be unsound. Truth is definable in terms of consistency among beliefs or propositions, or of correspondence with facts. Pragmatists accept this when they say, as James does, that beliefs "work," and are true, only if they *agree with* reality; and they take the "working" of a belief as evidence that the belief does agree with reality. Truth is something that belongs to the subject-matter of logic, while value has a field of its own. Value is the subject-matter of the special science of value, and

there is a growing agreement in defining value in terms of organic interests. Things are *made* valuable when they are liked or desired, when satisfaction is derived from their presence or possession, *etc.* The statement will, upon reflection, be challenged by few that there is nothing good or bad, but liking or disliking makes it so. Those who do disagree with such a definition, calling value indefinable, as Mr. Russell and Mr. Moore do,¹ or defining it in terms of harmony or fitness,² *etc.*, will still avoid any confusion between value and truth. Beliefs may be true or false; they may also have value or disvalue. In most cases, probably, true beliefs are valuable, and false beliefs have disvalue, but not in all cases. It is a fact that false religious beliefs have possessed value in the course of history; and it is probably true that false religious beliefs still possess value under some conditions.

Pragmatism is biological in its treatment of mind. Mental processes, according to pragmatism, have arisen as aids to adjustment of organisms to their environment. In such a view as James's truth, and the survival-value of beliefs in the biological struggle for existence, are made synonymous, and it is just this that constitutes the pragmatic fallacy. It might be argued that, according to the instrumental theory of consciousness, not all beliefs, but only true beliefs, *i. e.*, beliefs that correspond with reality, can be of biological utility³ through their instrumentality to the adjustment of the organism to its environment; but it is necessary to distinguish here, by reference to the objects of the two classes of beliefs, between what I shall call "scientific" beliefs and "metaphysical" beliefs. "Scientific" beliefs are beliefs about details of the physical environment. "Metaphysical" beliefs are beliefs about the nature of the universe as a whole, as, *e. g.*, the belief that the surface appearance of things is real, or the contrasting belief that ultimate reality lies only beneath the surface of phenomenal appearances. The phenomenal universe is not a "whole," so if there is a fundamental unity about the universe, it can be found only in some transcendent aspect of it. Beliefs in transexperiential realities of any sort, also, whether or not there be a unity about the objects, would be called "metaphysical" beliefs. Many religious beliefs are of this sort. "Scientific" hypotheses, if they are of any significance, are capable of empirical verification with at least some degree of success; while "metaphysical"

¹ Bertrand Russell, *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 4-15; G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, pp. 5-14.

² See G. H. Plamer, *The Nature of Goodness*.

³ Biological utility, or instrumentality, is a case of value, for what is instrumental to life is indirectly the object of interest or desire, since life is valued with approximate universality.

beliefs are mostly incapable of empirical verification. The beliefs that must be true in order to be valuable, biologically and otherwise, are the ones that I call "scientific" beliefs. For example, the belief that the ice on the river is safe is a "scientific" belief. It can be verified by venturing upon the ice. Such a belief as this possesses biological value only if true, for to believe that the ice is safe when in reality it is not safe may be an indirect cause of death, in case I go skating and am drowned as a consequence. Beliefs of this "scientific" sort are valuable only if they correspond with outside facts.

The case of "metaphysical" beliefs, however, is different. "Metaphysical" beliefs can not be verified by the pragmatic process of discovering the sense-data that constitute the objects with which the propositions correspond, for they refer to no empirical objects. But if they refer to no empirical objects that can serve as their verification, neither can they lead to objective results that are harmful. Holding a false "metaphysical" belief can never have such bad objective consequences as holding a false "scientific" belief, *e. g.*, a false belief about the condition of the ice; and the false "metaphysical" belief may, on the other hand, possess positive values of a subjective sort. An error believed has the same *subjective* effect upon the believer as a truth believed. Even if we assume naturalism to be the true metaphysical theory, it is plain that the (false) "tender-minded" belief in God would possess hygienic value for those who were made optimistic by the belief; and it would possess moral value for those who would not be moral without belief in supernatural sanctions. In the case of "metaphysical" beliefs, the effect is of a subjective sort, and is independent of the objective truth of the beliefs. A man in a naturalistic universe might profit from true "scientific" beliefs about the parts of the universe, and also from the emotional and moral effect of a false religious belief about the nature of the universe as a whole, its meaning, purpose, and the like. Many of the false religious beliefs of primitive man have had negative values so far as they have actually caused maladjustment to the physical environment by virtue of having "scientific" beliefs as components, but they have possessed numerous positive values, through being the source of moral instruction, of artistic production, of conceptions of law, *etc.* Much confusion will be avoided by keeping clear the distinction between the direct, subjective effects of "metaphysical" beliefs, and the indirect, objective effects of "scientific" beliefs. To believe in God, even if there be no God, can have no bad indirect, objective effect. On the other hand, the direct, subjective effects upon conduct, happiness, *etc.*, of religious beliefs may be of such positive value as to be a determining factor in the biological struggle for existence.

In the *Will to Believe*,⁴ James emphasizes the emotional and moral necessity of some sort of theistic belief for the majority of people. No other sort of world-view, he says, is congruent with human nature. He recognizes in this early work, too, that mere congruity with man's emotional nature is not the meaning or the test of truth. He says:⁵ "Theism, whatever its objective warrant, would thus be seen to have a subjective anchorage in its congruity with our nature as thinkers; and, *however it may fare with its truth*, to derive from this subjective adequacy the strongest possible guaranty of its permanency. . . . God may be called the normal object of the mind's belief. *Whether over and above this He be really the living truth is another question.* If He is, it will show the structure of the mind to be in accordance with the nature of reality." Though James here avoids the pragmatic fallacy by distinguishing the value of belief from its truth, his later developments of pragmatism obliterate the distinction, or they at least make emotional congruity sufficient evidence of truth in cases where verification by perception, consistency, *etc.*, is impossible or inconclusive. It is this that Professor Perry refers to as the pragmatic method of "verification by sentiment,"⁶ when verification proper is impossible. Since truth is a matter of logic and epistemology, the extra-logical matter of sentiment should not be admitted as a test of truth. Let us content ourselves by saying that unverifiable religious beliefs possess value or disvalue, and stop at this point, rather than confuse matters of psychology and theory of value with logic.

That James did not keep clear in his later writings on pragmatism the distinction between the value and the truth of belief is obvious, not only from the general spirit of pragmatism, but also from certain definite statements that he makes.⁷

The pragmatic fallacy extends to the case of mysticism when employed as James employs it as evidence for the truth of religious belief. James concludes⁸ that "personal religious experience has its root and center in mystical states of consciousness." Furthermore, it is largely, if not wholly, because of the value possessed by mystical states for the mystics themselves that James accepts mysticism as evidence of the truth of religion. A few quotations from James will make clear his position. He says:⁹ "Mystical states indeed wield no authority due simply to their being mystical states." "To pass a

⁴ Especially in Ch. IV.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 116. Italics mine.

⁶ *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, pp. 209, 10.

⁷ See *Pragmatism*, pp. 77, 204, 222, 273.

⁸ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 379.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 428, 413 (italics mine), 400.

spiritual judgment upon these states, we must . . . inquire into their *fruits for life*." "The Vedantists say that one may stumble into superconsciousness sporadically, without the previous training, but then it is impure. Their test of its purity, like our test of religious value [=truth, as I have pointed out, for the pragmatist], is empirical: *its fruits must be good for life*. When a man comes out of Samâdhi, they assure us that he remains 'enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illumined.' " If mystical states have "no authority due to their being mystical states," and if it is only because of their value that they are accepted as evidence for the truth of the religious beliefs associated with them, or in terms of which they are interpreted by the mystics themselves, then here is another clear case of the pragmatic fallacy.

II

The question of the interpretation of mysticism leads up to the fallacy that I have called the fallacy of false attribution, which consists in the erroneous interpretation of an experience whereby the experience is attributed to an external, divine source in cases where a physiological explanation is adequate to account for the experience. Thus James says that the "inner" experiences, mystical in nature, which are central in religion, point to the intervention of superhuman powers. But it is possible that mysticism is only a form of emotionalism, explainable within a purely naturalistic scheme. Postponing for the moment a more thorough examination of mysticism, I will simply say that *if* mysticism is only a form of emotionalism, then the mystic, though indubitably passing through the experience, errs in ascribing to it a divine significance that does not belong to it. This is the fallacy of false attribution.

As Professor Hocking says,¹⁰ "To distinguished between what is subjective and what is objective about our experience is frequently difficult, even in physical observation; but especially in the experience of the mystic." The difficulty of distinguishing subjective from objective aspects of any experience that occurs when one is in an unusual physiological condition is well illustrated in Kipling's *La Nuit Blanche*. Here a man with the "jims" on has remarkable experiences:

In the full, fresh, fragrant morning,
I observed a camel crawl,
Laws of gravitation scorning,
On the ceiling and the wall.

This is only one of his spectacular experiences. He himself perti-

¹⁰ *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, pp. 352, 353.

nently raises the question of the real objectivity of events in which the natural order of things is so upset, for he asks:

Was it earthquake or tobacco,
Day of doom or night of drink?

The truth of a belief in God is tested by seeking the object denoted by the word "God." If the mystic defined God as the mystical experience itself, then the truth of the belief in God would be established when the experience was obtained. But God, for the mystic, is not the mystical experience itself. That is, God is not the experiencing, but the experienced. God is believed by the mystic to be real outside of the occasional mystical experiences, and to reveal himself in the experiences. God is believed to be, not the experience, but the giver of the experience, which is interpreted as an experience of union with God. There is attribution of the experience to a supernatural source. Without such attribution, the experience is not called a religious experience.

James argues quite unsoundly that the question of the origin of an experience is irrelevant. He says,¹¹ "The plain truth is that to interpret religion one must in the end look at the immediate content of the religious consciousness." I would fully agree with this, since one essential component of the religious consciousness is the belief in something superhuman, but since such a belief is necessarily present in every religious experience,¹² the question of the natural or supernatural origin of the emotional components of the experience is very relevant indeed.

James's whole argument against the validity of attaching any significance to the connection between religion and sex is rather weak. It is not because "language drawn from the sexual life"¹³ is common in religious literature that the psychologist interprets religion in terms of "sublimation" of sex. Much of religious literature is unreliable as scientific psychological evidence. This is shown by the fact, as James points out, that religion has often been described in terms of other instincts, more or less irrelevant. But it is just because religion is actually observed by modern psychologists to be correlated with sexual phenomena that a sexual origin is frequently ascribed to it.

What James really seems to be arguing for is the irrelevance, so far as truth and falsity are concerned, of ascribing to an experience a pathological, as opposed to a normal, physiological origin. He

¹¹ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 12, note.

¹² In the case of the mystical experience there is present, at least *after* the experience, the belief that an objective God was revealed.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 11, note.

admits my contention that the question of physiological origin is relevant when "supernatural origin is pleaded by the other side."¹⁴ In the case of the religious experience, there is belief in a supernatural origin, as James himself insists. So in reality there is little disagreement in the last analysis between the views of James and the point that I am insisting on. James would admit the fallacy of false attribution when the question is one of attributing an experience to a supernatural source, by the one who has the experience, if the psychologist can establish the physiological origin of the experience.

Mysticism may be identified with the metaphysical system that asserts the unity, timelessness, immediacy, and ineffableness of reality, together with the denial of reality to the phenomenal world. Royce defines it thus, and proceeds to refute it.¹⁵ Professor Hocking accepts¹⁶ Royce's refutation, but says that mysticism has been historically a much broader thing than the metaphysical system that Royce refutes. Professor Hocking says,¹⁷ "The agreement of the mystics lies in that fact, prior to doctrine, and wholly coextensive with religion, the practise of union with God in a special act of worship." But here is the rub. Here the whole question at issue is stated, in contradictory form. "The practise of union with God in a special act of worship" is not a "fact, prior to doctrine," as Professor Hocking says it is. It is rather the doctrinal interpretation of a fact. The fact is the experiencing. The doctrine is, that something objective, God, is experienced.

I would agree that the mystic's worship is an attempt to gain *what the worshiper believes is union with God*; but so long as science and scientific methods are accepted, there is a presumption against the truth of the belief. The mystic commits the fallacy of false attribution. The source of his experience is "within" and not without. The experience is a form of emotionalism, which consists of visceral reverberations involved in certain responses of the organism.

Professor Leuba has made a psychological study of mysticism,¹⁸ and his conclusion is that mysticism is a form of sublimated love. This is the conclusion of the Freudians. Professor Coe gives a good criticism of mysticism.¹⁹ He denies that anything objective is re-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁵ *The World and the Individual*, Vol. I., Ch. II.

¹⁶ *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 351.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

¹⁸ See "On the Psychology of a Group of Christian Mystics," *Mind*, N. S., Vol. 14 (1905), pp. 15-27.

¹⁹ G. A. Coe, "The Sources of the Mystical Revelation," *The Hibbert Journal*, Vol. VI. (1907-08), pp. 359-372.

vealed in the mystical experience itself, and says that the objective factor is added when the experience is interpreted. The cause of the interpretation made does not reside in the nature of the experience itself; but "tradition and instruction, auto-suggestion grown habitual, and reflective analysis,"²⁰ determine the interpretation of the mystical experience as a revelation of God. "The mystic brings his theological beliefs to the mystical experience; he does not derive them from it."²¹

Though the half-way mysticism of most mystics is inadequate, and involves the fallacy of false attribution, it is still possible that there may be a mystical solution of the religious problem. So long as any recognition is made of phenomenal reality and the world that the sciences study, mysticism must be regarded as emotionalism only, with a false belief as to the source of the emotion; but a complete metaphysical mysticism, such as Royce expounds and refutes, may still be the truest insight, and farthest from a final refutation. Thoroughgoing mysticism is at least wonderfully attractive, occasionally for all reflective persons, and always for a few; and it will continue to lure world-weary souls to the promised rest and peace of its Nirvana.

WESLEY RAYMOND WELLS.

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY.

DR. DEWEY'S DUALITY AND DUALISM

DR. DEWEY'S "Duality and Dualism"¹ furnishes another depressing bit of evidence that even the ablest philosophers sometimes can not grasp the simplest distinctions of those who hold views alien to their own. At the outset of the article whose logic Professor Dewey criticizes I had taken pains to explain the distinction between what many of us call epistemological dualism and what we call ontological dualism. I had tried in earlier articles (to one of which he also refers) to make clear that my view, although epistemologically dualistic, was ontologically monistic. My distinction had been ignored by several critics, who attacked my doctrine as an ontological dualism. In this article, therefore, I wrote: "I wish to leave no excuse for any further confusion of my epistemological dualism with ontological dualism." "In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I wish to state as explicitly as possible that I personally side with the dominant tendency in American realism in denying the existence

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

¹ This JOURNAL, Vol. XIV., p. 491.